# Fifteenth Century Italian Woodcuts

## from the Biblioteca Classense, Ravenna

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*Catalogue of an Exhibition*

University of Toronto Library
1989

Exhibition presented by the Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Toronto, and the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto; and sponsored by the Comune di Ravenna.

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Biblioteca comunale classense (Ravenna, Italy). Fifteenth century Italian woodcuts from the Biblioteca classense, Ravenna

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Cover illustration: 22 *Saint Anthony of Padua* (Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense)

Frontispiece: 32 *Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence* (Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense) and Jacobello del Fiore, *Martirio di S. Lorenzo* (Amsterdam, Rijkmuseum)

# Preface

Single-sheet incunable woodcuts are among the rarest of prints. Most of the few thousand surviving impressions belong to the great public collections of Europe and America, and newly-discovered examples are virtually unobtainable to the few collectors who still pursue them.

Five-hundred-year-old scraps of paper are unlikely to come down to us in good condition unless they have been protected by early incorporation into manuscript books or document collections. Even then, many were trimmed down or defaced by those who gathered them, or by later owners. The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, is therefore delighted to be able to exhibit, for the first time outside Italy, the unique collection of fifteenth-century woodcuts, mostly of Italian origin, from the Biblioteca Classense, the library founded by the Camaldolese monks of Classe, the old sea-port for Ravenna, and transferred to that city in 1551.

It was Alfio Longo of Ravenna, the distinguished publisher of the most recent catalogue of the Classense collection, who first suggested, during his visit to Toronto in 1988, that the woodcuts be exhibited at the Fisher Library. This suggestion was received with enthusiasm by Carole Moore, Chief Librarian of the University of Toronto, and was energetically pursued by Dott.ssa Francesca Valente, Director of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Toronto. Planning for the exhibition went ahead with the help of the Director of the Biblioteca Comunale Classense di Ravenna, Donatino Domini, and the cooperation of the Mayor and the Assessore alla Cultura of the Comune di Ravenna. To them go the warm thanks of the University of Toronto Library. They have made it possible for these little-known and fragile treasures of the city of Ravenna to be seen in North America.

My particular thanks go to Dott.ssa Mariella Rebecchini, formerly Assistant Director of the Toronto office of the Italian Cultural Institute, and my valued colleague and friend during her time in Toronto. My thanks also to Professor W. McAllister Johnson of the Department of Fine Art at the University of Toronto, to Dr. Howard Collinson of the Royal Ontario Museum, to Alan Horne, Director of Development and Public Affairs at the University of Toronto Library, and to Richard Landon, Director, and his colleagues at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

*Robin Healey*
*University of Toronto Library*

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# Introduction

## Jacopo Rubieri

On the 14th of August in 1487 an insignificant notary called Jacopo Rubieri made his will. Then in his late fifties, he had laboured for most of his adult life as a minor cleric and canon lawyer in Rome, Ragusa (now Dubrovnik) and the Dalmatian coast, Padua and, after 1479, Venice. He named his nephew, Giovanni Battista, as his heir, but willed his household goods and his library of legal works to one Antonio Angelo Canali, with whom he lived in Venice. A pious man, fierce in his denunciation of sin, mistrustful of women, envious of his richer and more clever colleagues, Rubieri concentrated on his legal work, and had little time for people and the world around him. In later life, he devoted much of his time to copying minor legal texts.

Jacopo Rubieri died some time after 1500. His library was probably sold shortly thereafter. More than two hundred years later, in 1711, Pietro Canneti, recognized as the founder of the Biblioteca Classense, bought some of Rubieri's manuscripts in Pesaro. The Camaldolese abbot made no note of any illustrations, his primary interest being in humanistic texts, and it was not until 1886, four hundred years after the will was made, that Andrea Zoli, then the librarian at Ravenna, discovered the great and unique treasure bequeathed by Rubieri—the forty-eight sheets and fragments of fifteenth-century woodcuts and engravings of the Classense collection, pasted and interleaved among the legal texts of the notary's "great work".

## The Classense Collection

The prints with which Jacopo Rubieri decorated his legal texts were for the most part hand-coloured, single-sheet woodblock prints, together with four engravings, and one metalcut. Rubieri himself had cut around the outlines of many of the saints in the collection before he pasted them into his manuscripts, while it was, as Bellini at least suggests, some later owner who inked in around the figures of saints in the complete prints, obscuring all the backgrounds.

It was in this damaged state that the prints were exhibited, sandwiched between sheets of glass, at the Biblioteca Classense, and were studied by the great foreign scholars Lehrs, Schreiber, Kristeller, Prince d'Essling and Hind. It was only in 1938 that the Classense prints were cleaned and restored at the laboratories of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana under the painstaking

supervision of Lamberto Donati. During this process additional prints were found underneath some of the images, and thus the collection returned to Ravenna augmented by six pieces (cat. 2, 10, 16, 18, 35, 38).

In 1971 Giancarlo Schizzerotto, a former director of the Biblioteca Comunale di Ravenna, published a seminal study in which he traced the career of Jacopo Rubieri, discussed the origin and history of his manuscripts, and published the first full descriptive catalogue of the prints themselves. The collection, augmented by two pieces from a Rubieri manuscript preserved at the Biblioteca Oliveriana in Pesaro and other early woodcuts from Florence, Prato and Rome, went on display in 1987 at the Gabinetto Nazionale dei Disegni e delle Stampe in Rome. The catalogue for that exhibition, prepared by Fiora Bellini of the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, forms the basis, together with Schizzerotto's book, for the present catalogue.

## The Woodcut and Early Printing

The woodcut was the earliest form of printmaking, and was also, therefore, the earliest technique for the exact repetition of pictorial statements. For this reason, as Ivins points out, printmaking was an invention of greater importance for science and technology, and for the dissemination of general information, than for art.

The earliest woodcuts printed on paper, contemporary considerations of rarity or aesthetic merit aside, served essentially practical purposes. They were, for the most part, playing cards and devotional images. The gaming-cards provided a cheap and easily-replaceable form of entertainment, even if the results obtained were expensive and irrevocably destructive for the gamblers' souls, as Bernardino of Siena pointed out in his Lenten sermons of 1424 (see cat. 19). The pictures of saints and biblical scenes, of the sort that have come down to us today in greatest numbers, were used as talismans for protection against sickness, famine and war, or as objects of personal devotion to Jesus, Mary, or one of the multitude of saints recognized by the late medieval Church. We should also recognize the propagandistic uses of these early images, many of which were circulated by the various religious orders to promote devotion to their saints, and gain support for their institutions (see, particularly, the Dominican images, cat. 39-41).

These woodcuts were pasted onto walls and doors; they served as domestic altarpieces; they were pasted inside boxes and containers of all sorts; they were even sewn into clothing. The greater part of those that have survived, however, have come down to us in books and manuscripts like the texts copied by Rubieri. The point is, as Field succinctly states, that: "The function of the woodcut... was locked in its meaning and hardly attached to its aesthetic character; its purpose was to convey a simple idea or fix a concept. It was not attached to the more esoteric realms of political, intellectual or artistic idealism."

Woodcuts and metalcuts are relief prints. A design is drawn onto the surface of the prepared block, and the parts which are to remain white are cut away, leaving the black lines or areas in relief. The engraving, in contrast, is an intaglio print in which the design is cut into a metal plate, and the ink transferred to the paper not from the surface of the plate, which is wiped clean, but from the engraved furrows. Intaglio prints require a powerful press to force the dampened paper into the graved lines and pick up the ink. Relief print designs such as the early woodcuts could be transferred to the paper by stamping or rubbing, as well as with a press.

The earliest European woodblocks were those used to produce patterned textiles, of which some examples, as well as written references to the technique and the trade, survive from the fourteenth century. The activities of the early woodcut workshops, around the beginning of the fifteenth century, were divided between the production of devotional images and the making of playing-cards. Of this production up to 1500, the period defining incunabula, Field estimates that fewer than 10,000 sheets survive, most of them unique. The great majority are from Germany, the Low Countries, Austria, Switzerland and France. Thirty-eight of the forty-three Classense woodcuts are judged to be of Italian origin, and the collection thus constitutes the largest known grouping of Italian incunable single-sheet woodcuts. Of the forty-six prints in this exhibition, forty-two are unique; and two others are known in only two impressions, both in the Biblioteca Classense.

The production of a woodcut requires a variety of skills. The design must be made; it must be transferred to the wood block; the block must then be cut, and the design printed. While an individual could, and evidently in some cases did carry out the whole process, contemporary references do differentiate among those who carried out the various tasks: Schreiber, at least, was convinced that the strict medieval system of trades existed in the textile workshops, and was passed on to the woodcut artisans.

Given the practical requirements of the method of production and the practical purposes for which the woodcuts were produced, there are certain unavoidable consequences for the connoisseur or art historian. Surviving works from the earliest periods are anonymous, and difficult to date and localize. Also, there is very little connection between the woodcut image and other artistic forms, while the proportion of artistically-designed and well-executed works, as in any popular art, is small. Again, the most popular images were copied time after time, and with a multitude of stylistic differences, further complicating the task of the art historian (e.g., cat. 12). On this subject, Field writes:

> There is not one sure date connected with a woodcut produced before 1450. And there is not one sure document that allows us to isolate and recognize a workshop in any city before 1460. Only with the advent of the typeset book, which became the natural vehicle for woodcut illustration by 1460, are we afforded some touchstones for stylistic comparison. Since most books were the proud productions of their printers, they bear both the place and date of publication.

This exhibition includes some examples of incunabula with woodcut illustrations from the collection of the Thomas Fisher Library, including the recent gift of an account written by Ulrich von Richental, and printed at Augsburg in 1483, of the Council of Constance (1414 - 1418), which brought an end to the Great Schism, with its three rival popes.

## The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Italy

There is some evidence that the Italian woodcut workshops of the fifteenth century were more likely to have been associated with the ateliers of painters and other artists than those in Germany and elsewhere. Thus Schizzerotto and Bellini have been able to identify works which were the model for some of the Classense woodcuts, and to name the artists who were responsible for, or influenced, the design of others (e.g., cat. 3, 14, 31, 32).

Rubieri followed his profession in Central and Northeastern Italy and Yugoslavia, from Rome to Dubrovnik. His copies of legal texts now in the Biblioteca Classense were made and compiled after 1471, during his later residence in Padua and Venice. Evidence for the Venetian or upper Adriatic origin of a majority of the Classense woodcuts is therefore on a firmer basis, particularly for saints of local importance, than for localizations relying principally on connoisseurship. We can suppose, following Bellini, that over the years, during his journeys among churches, shrines and confraternity houses, after sermons, services and processions, this humble clerk and lawyer, this unrefined admirer of saints, collected his small patrimony of devotional images.

With regard to the dating of the impressions, however, there remains a broad disagreement between the estimates of earlier scholars, such as Schreiber and Hind, and those by Bellini which are based chiefly on stylistic considerations. This continues the more general controversy about the dating of early woodcuts, in which the Germans accord precedence to German prints, while French scholars assign early dates to French prints. The argument for a very early date for some of the Classense prints, in which Bellini relies upon stylistic similarities to the works of painters of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, or on perceived late Gothic or Byzantine influences, in order to postulate dates of around 1400 - 1440, is unconvincing. Only one

print (cat. 3) displays the broken impression and irregular edges typical, according to Hind, of the earliest, stamped wood block prints of that period. Given the ephemeral nature of early woodcuts and the probability that Rubieri collected the greater part of his impressions after 1470, the dates in the first half of the fifteenth century proposed for many of the Classense woodcuts should be considered hypothetical.

## Note

At the Fisher Library, the prints have been arranged in broad thematic groupings rather than in the chronological order proposed in *Fifteenth Century Italian Woodcuts from the Biblioteca Classense* (1989). The exhibition number in that catalogue is given in brackets immediately after the Fisher Library catalogue number.

Text/exhibition: *Robin Healey*

Exhibition mounting in Fisher Library:
*Emrys Evans/Linda Joy*

Catalogue Design: *Veronica Fisher*

# Case 1: Early Prints

## *1 [1]*
### The Trinity with Saints

Verona, end of the 14th c. (?)
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 45
Woodcut, 465 x 390 mm., with lacks
Red lead, brown, opaque yellow, applied with the aid of stencils

References: Schreiber 749f; Schizzerotto, tav. I; Bellini 1

This woodcut was discovered in 1896, pasted into the binding of manuscript Porto 1161bis of the Archivio di Stato, Ravenna. In its complete state this would be one of the largest prints among surviving early woodcuts.

The saints who can be identified include Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Saint Bartholomew, Saint Clare of Assisi, Saint Helen, Saint Christopher, Saint John the Baptist, Saint James, Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

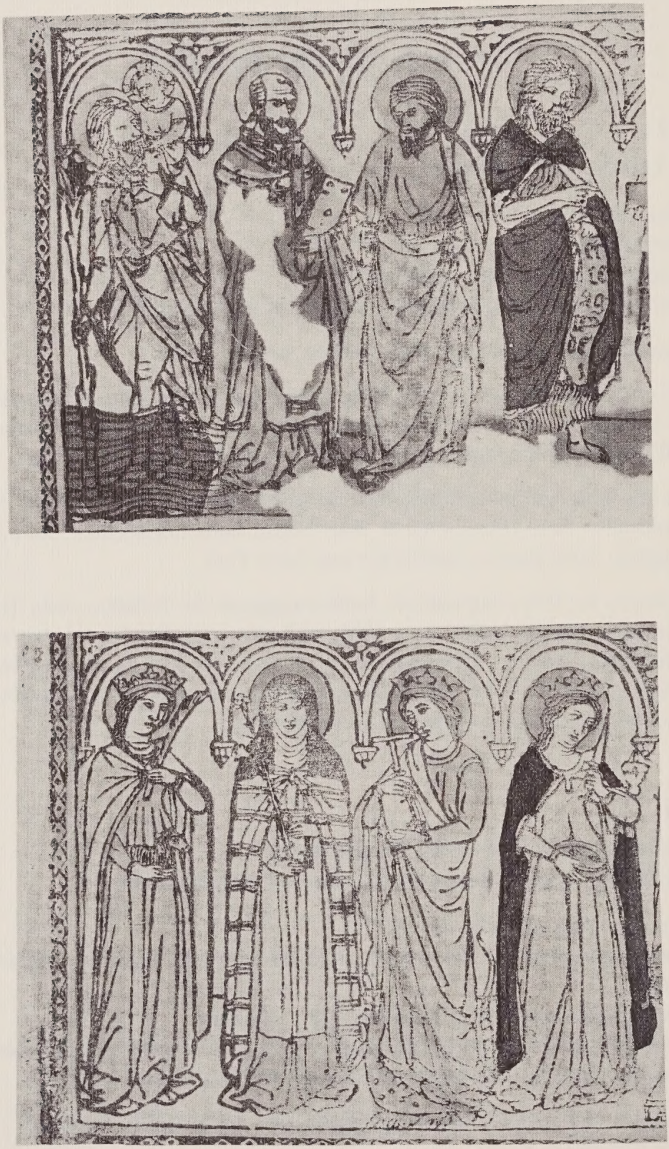
As a source for this composition, Bellini suggests the Polittico della Trinità by Turone di Maxio, painted ca. 1360, and now preserved in the Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona. The presence of saints particularly venerated by the Franciscans (Clare, John the Baptist, James) indicates to Schizzerotto a Franciscan inspiration for this print's production.

## *2 [2]*
### Saint Laurence and Saint Stephen (?)
### Saint Barbara and Saint Catherine of Alexandria

Veneto, late 14th or early 15th c. (?)
Biblioteca Classense inv. nos. 7bis from codex 485/V and 29 from codex 485/IV (f. 642)
Woodcut fragments, 275 x 104 mm., 278 x 104 mm.
Light yellow, yellow, brown, grey, green, rose, applied with the aid of stencils
Watermark: (partial, left fragment) Sun (?) within a circle

References: Schreiber 1248; Schizzerotto, tav. XVII, XVIII; Bellini 2

The consensus of earlier critical opinion is that the sheet from which these fragments derive was printed between 1440 and 1470, but Bellini assigns the print to the beginning of the century on stylistic grounds.



3 *Two Rows of Saints* (Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense)

## *3 [3]*
### Two Rows of Saints

Venice, late 14th or early 15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. nos. 2 and 26 from codex 485
Woodcut fragments, 140 x 174 mm., 138 x 175 mm.
Dark blue, yellow, yellow-green, rose, applied with the aid of stencils
Watermark: Scales within a circle surmounted by a star

References: Schreiber 1767, 1768; Schizzerotto, tav. X, XI; Bellini 3

These are fragments from the left side of a large woodcut, probably of the Trinity or the enthroned Virgin surrounded by saints. The saints depicted are Saint Christopher, Saint Nicholas of Myra, Saints Bartholomew and John the Baptist, Saint Agnes, Saint Clare, Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Lucy.

Bellini, who identifies the Byzantine-influenced style as that of the workshop of Lorenzo Veneziano (fl. 1357-1379) or one of his direct successors, again proposes a much earlier date for these fragments than the 1450-1470 suggested by Schreiber and accepted by Schizzerotto.

## *4 [5]*
### Saint Zachariah

Venice, ca. 1430
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 33 from codex 485
Woodcut fragment, 233 x 160 mm.
Red lead, blue, yellow, black-brown, applied with the aid of stencils
Watermark: Bull's head surmounted by a flower

References: Schreiber 1750; Schizzerotto, tav. XXVIII; Bellini 6

A more complete example of this cut exists in the collection of the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence. Saint Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, was a patron of Venice. His attribute is the thurible (incense-burner), as befits a priest. The scroll in his left hand, however, refers to Zachariah the prophet, indicating a (common) confusion of the Old and New Testament Zachariahs.

The incongruous straight lines at the top of the saint's halo are in fact part of the frame of the full print.

## *5 [9]*
### Saint Catherine of Alexandria

Italy, mid-15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 37 from codex 485/IV (f. 80r)
Woodcut fragment, 250 x 165 mm.
Blue, yellow, green, red-brown, grey-green

References: Schreiber 1316; Schizzerotto, tav. VII; Bellini 11

According to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, the story of Saint Catherine is recorded in two sources as of "no historical value". A noble Alexandrian lady, she was converted to Christianity, and herself converted the Empress. For this she was tortured on the wheel and beheaded. The saint is shown standing, sword in hand, over her persecutor, the emperor Maximian, with the wheel, the instrument of her martyrdom, at her feet.

Schreiber identified this fragment as German on the stylistic evidence of the treatment of the saint's robes. Bellini suggests that it is an Italian production based on a German exemplar.

## *6 [16]*
### Saint George Slaying the Dragon

Northern Italy, mid-15th c. (?)
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 38 from codex 485/V
Woodcut, 266 x 189 mm.
Brown, yellow-brown, grey, black

References: Schreiber 1442; Schizzerotto, tav.XII; Bellini 18

In this dilapidated and heavily inked-over print, only the figures of Saint George on his horse, the dragon, and the princess can be discerned. Schreiber and Schizzerotto both propose a date of around 1475 and an Italian origin for this print. Bellini sees some resemblances to *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* (cat. 14). There is also a strong formal resemblance between this impression and a woodcut of the same subject in the *Leggenda de Sancto Maurelio* printed by Laurentius de Rubeis at Ferrara in 1489, illustrated in the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 2$^{e}$ pér., XXXVIII (1888) p. 97.

# Case 2: New Testament Prints

## *7 [33]*
### Saint John the Baptist

Venice, ca. 1470
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 16 from codex 485
Woodcut fragment, 220 x 96 mm.
Opaque yellow, green, light brown

References: Schreiber 1511; Schizzerotto, tav. XIII; Bellini 37

Critical opinion is united on the provenance, dating, and high artistic quality of this fragment, in which Bellini sees the influence of Mantegna, or of Giovanni Bellini in his Mantegnaesque period.

## *8 [17]*
### The Nativity

North-central Italy, second half of the 15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 1 from codex 485
Woodcut, 275 x 200 mm.
Pale yellow, light brown
Watermark: Peaks surmounted by a crescent (partial)

References: Schreiber 63; Schizzerotto, tav. II; Bellini 19

The elements of this charming print appear to have been assembled from a variety of sources by the skilled craftsman who cut the block. The angel musicians and the arch below them, for instance, belong in a liturgical manuscript, while the trees resemble some depicted in the *Tacuinum sanitatis*. Also of interest is the block-cutter's technique, in part that of the traditional woodcut, and in part executed so that the areas cut away would constitute the design, presenting an image of white against black. The dotted decoration of the hem of Mary's robe, and the frame, recall the "dotted prints" of the early metalcut, as cat. 45, Saint Roch.

Scholars have had relatively little to say about where this print was produced, perhaps because of its synthetic composition and demotic style. Bellini thinks it is a Lombard product.

8 *Nativity* (Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense)

## *9 [12]*
### The Last Supper

Swabia, ca. 1450
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 27 from codex 485/V (loose leaf)
Woodcut, 262 x 195 mm.
Rose-brown, yellow, green, rose, pale grey, black
Watermark: Bull's head surmounted by a star

References: Schreiber 169; Schizzerotto, tav. LXV; Bellini 14

This print, together with the *Death of the Virgin* from the British Museum (Schreiber 710) and the *Christ bearing the Cross* from the Albertina in Vienna (Schreiber 337) have been attributed to an anonymous master working in Swabia around the middle of the 15th c.

Points of interest in this unusually free and complex composition include the varied and individual treatment of the apostles—from Saint John asleep at Christ's side, to Judas with the purse around his neck, his shock of hair, and the demon issuing from his mouth as Christ offers him the host—and the style of hatching on the table and some of the halos.

## *10 [10]*
### The Dead Christ on the Cross

Italian copy of a German exemplar, ca. 1450 - 1460 (?)
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 34bis from codex 485
Woodcut fragment, 183 x 118 mm.
Dark red, yellow, brown, green

References: Schizzerotto, tav. V; Bellini 12

In its original, complete form such a crucifixion scene would almost inevitably have included the figures of the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Evangelist at the foot of the cross. Bellini also suggests the presence of two hovering angels, collecting in chalices the blood dripping from Christ's wounds (which is not figured in the block, but was added in the colouring process). Such angels are present in some of the German 15th c. woodcut crucifixion scenes illustrated in Field's catalogue of woodcuts and metalcuts from the National Gallery of Art in Washington. In those examples, however, they are invariably accompanied by a third angel at Christ's feet, not in evidence in our fragment. The trace of black background remaining suggests to Bellini the darkness which covered the earth at the moment of Christ's death, but prints of other subjects in the Classense collection were also blacked in around the figures in this manner; therefore the reason for this treatment should be sought in a more general context.

## *11 [41]*
### Death

Northern Italy, ca. 1480
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 4 from codex 485/V
Woodcut fragment, 154 x 80 mm.
Brown, yellow

References: Schreiber 1888; Schizzerotto, tav. XIX; Bellini 45

This skeletal figure appears to have been cut from a larger composition, perhaps a *Danse Macabre* of the type which spread from France to Italy late in the 15th c.

Jacopo Rubieri, the collector of the Classense woodcuts, pasted this fragment at the end of the last manuscript written and collected by him, as Bellini notes, "almost as if it were his figurative testament."

## *12 [11]*
### The Last Judgement

Italian copy of a German original, ca. 1450-1460
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 36 from codex 485/IV (f. 32r)
Woodcut, 267 x 187 mm.
Yellow, red lead, green, rose-brown, dark brown, pale grey

References: Schreiber 603; Schizzerotto, tav. XLVI; Bellini 13

This print can be compared to the very similar *Last Judgement*, considered to be of German origin, in the British Museum (Schreiber 602). Differences in the treatment of the folds in the clothing and in the modelling of the limbs and faces of the figures, however, show that the two examples were printed from different blocks. Bellini suggests that the print in the Biblioteca Classense came from a block prepared in Italy as a copy from an example of the German print.

In contrast to the saved, who appear fully-clothed, and include a pope, a bishop, a monk and a pilgrim, the damned are shown naked, as a sign of their sinful condition.

# Case 3: Fathers and Founders

## *13 [7]*
### The Penitence of Saint Jerome

Northeastern Italy, 1440-1450
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 7 from codex 485/IV (f. 43r)
Woodcut fragments, 173 x 80 mm., 175 x 80 mm., 70 x 53 mm.
Grey, pale grey, yellow

References: Schreiber 1542; Schizzerotto, tav. XIV; Bellini 9

Saint Jerome (ca. 340 - ca. 420) was probably the most learned man of his time. He was chiefly responsible for the Vulgate version of the Bible. Irascible in temperament, Jerome was sensitive, and suspicious of his ascetical and theological rivals. He is reputed to have spent much time in the Syrian desert as a self-mortifying penitent.

The Classense fragments follow a standard Renaissance iconography for Jerome. He is shown as an old man, beating his emaciated chest with a rock, his cardinal's hat on the ground beside him, a lion seated in front of him. In German-speaking areas, he was frequently depicted with the cardinal's hat and Bellini detects Austrian or Bohemian-Moravian influences in the saint's appearance.

## *14 [14]*
### Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata

Lombardy, mid-15th c. (?)
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 15 from codex 485/IV (f. 200r)
Woodcut, 252 x 190 mm.
Pale grey, green, crimson, red lead, brown, rose, applied with the aid of stencils
Watermark: Crown

References: Schreiber 1423; Schizzerotto, tav. XXXV; Bellini 16

The life and message of Saint Francis received a direct sanction from Christ in 1224, just two years before the saint's death, when on September 14 he received the stigmata of the Passion at La Verna, the monastery he founded in the Etruscan Appenines, not far from Arezzo. This was the first documented occurrence of stigmata.

The model for this woodcut has been identified as a painting of the same subject by Gentile da Fabriano, dated between 1414 and 1419, now in the collection of the Fondazione Magnani Rocca. The image is reversed as a consequence of the printing process. This print and the print of Saint Bernardino of Siena (cat. 19) are thought to be the work of the same artist, on the basis of stylistic similarities in the figures and background. The prints may have formed part of a series of Franciscan devotional images.

## *15 [20]*
### Saint Augustine Presents his Rule to the Preaching Orders

Veneto, mid-15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 35 from codex 485
Woodcut, 236 x 170 mm.
Green, rose, pale grey, yellow, rose-brown
Watermark: Scales within a circle surmounted by a star

References: Schreiber 1743; Schizzerotto, tav. XXX; Bellini 22

Augustine holds in his left hand a model of a church, and in his right the *Rule* open at its incipit: "Ante omnia fratres carissimi deligatur deus deinde proximus." He is flanked by three rows of monks and nuns from the mendicant orders which followed his teachings (Dominicans, Carmelites, Franciscans and Augustinians). Bellini sees in this work an example of Dominican devotional propaganda related to *Saint Augustine Blessing Saint Monica and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino* (cat. 38). On stylistic grounds, however, she dates that print some twenty years later than *Saint Augustine Presents his Rule.*

## *16 [21]*
### Saint Francis and Brother Leo

Central Italy, mid-15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 10bis from codex 485/V
Woodcut fragments, 110 x 60 mm., 75 x 80 mm.
Grey-green, dark red, yellow, green

References: Schizzerotto, tav. XXXIV; Bellini 23

These fragments were found under the print of Saint Tryphon (cat. 21/2) during the restoration work of 1938. Saint Francis is shown receiving the stigmata, while Brother Leo concentrates on his reading.

## *17 [25]*
### Meeting of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic

North Adriatic region, 1460 - 1480
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 8 from codex 485
Woodcut fragment, 210 x 134 mm.
Light brown, dark brown, red, yellow, green
Watermark: Bull's head with the muzzle in the form of a crown, surmounted by a flower.

References: Schreiber 1391; Schizzerotto, tav. XXXIII; Bellini 29

The two saints, about to embrace each other on meeting, with an angel above inclining their heads together, are supported by the saints of their orders, separated by a terrestrial globe. The other saints shown are Thomas Aquinas, Peter Martyr, Anthony of Padua, Louis of Toulouse, Elizabeth of Hungary, Clare of Assisi, Margaret of Hungary and Catherine of Siena. The actual meeting between Francis and Dominic is supposed to have taken place at Perugia in 1221. The orders later fell out over the question of the stigmata of Catherine of Siena, a dispute ended by Sextus IV's Bull of 1475. This image would be Franciscan in decoration, if not in origin, as Francis alone bears the stigmata (visible only on his foot).

## *18 [29]*
### Saint Augustine (?)

Padua, ca. 1460
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 34 from codex 485
Woodcut fragment, 251 x 115 mm.
Blue, brown, rose, green, opaque yellow

References: Schreiber 1579; Schizzerotto, tav. XXIX; Bellini 33

Bellini considers this woodcut figure one of the best realized, in its artistic and technical qualities, of the entire Classense collection. The harmony of the composition persuades her that the artist himself cut the block. The figure is identified as Saint Augustine (rather than as Saint-bishop Justus, as noted below the figure by Rubieri) taking into consideration that saint's greater importance, and wider diffusion of images. In addition, Schizzerotto noted that the broach closing the saint's mantle has the form of a flaming heart, a frequent attribute of Augustine.

## *I*

***Biblia latina*. Venice: Simone Bevilacqua, 1498.**

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

Simone Gabi, known as Bevilacqua, was active as a printer in Venice and Vicenza between 1485 and 1506, and elsewhere in Italy until 1514. He had previously published an edition of the Vulgate in Venice in 1494. The copy shown is open at the woodcut of Saint Jerome, principal translator of the Vulgate.

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# Case 4: Saints and Martyrs

## *19 [15]*

**Saint Bernardino of Siena**

Lombardy, mid-15th c. (?)
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 14 from codex 485/V (loose leaf)
Woodcut, 257 x 183 mm.
Pale grey, green, vermilion, opaque yellow, rose, applied with the aid of stencils

References: Schreiber 1279; Schizzerotto, tav. XXXVI; Bellini 17

Saint Bernardino (1380 - 1444) is shown with his hands raised in the position he habitually adopted when preaching. He holds a book, and a tablet or paten bearing the monogram of Christ. The three mitres represent the three sees (Siena, Ferrara and Urbino) which the saint, in his humility, refused. The standard iconography for Bernardino is followed to the extent of portraying him with a wrinkled face and a wart under his left eye.

Though stylistically similar to *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* (cat.14)—note the treatment of the sky, the saints' halos, hair and tonsures, eyes, etc.—this print is less sophisticated in terms of its graphic qualities, perhaps indicating the lack of a painted exemplar for Bernardino.

This image, with the three mitres like pips on a playing-card, brings to mind a story about Bernardino recounted by Hind in his history of the woodcut: Bologna appears to have been a hot-bed of gambling in the early 15th c., and it needed Saint Bernardino in his Lenten sermons in that city in 1424 to persuade the players to burn their cards. Thereupon the story goes how a card-maker, coming to the saint complaining that he had lost his custom, was bidden to cut the Sacred Monogram (with which Saint Bernardino was generally represented in pictures and prints) and so to recover his livelihood. There is a certain irony, then, in a devotional image of Bernardino that

resembles a playing-card. Bernardino was canonized in 1450, and this impression certainly postdates that event.

## *20 [18]*
### Saint Filippo Benizzi

North Adriatic region, mid-15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 28 from codex 485/V (loose leaf)
Woodcut, 282 x 135 mm.
Brown, opaque yellow

References: Schreiber 1651; Schizzerotto, tav.XL; Bellini 20

Filippo Benizzi (1233-1285) was the fifth general of the Ordine dei servi di Maria (Servites). He was not canonized until 1671, and this is why in this image he is shown with the nimbus of the beatified rather than the halo of the saint. Bellini suggests early 15th c. frescoes from the Marches as a source for this image.

## *21 [28]*
### Saint Tryphon

Venice, 1450-1460
1) Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 9 from codex 485
Woodcut fragment, 195 x 108 mm.
Pale blue, yellow, green, pale rose
Watermark: Bull's head
2) Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 10 from codex 485/V
Woodcut fragment, 192 x 110 mm.
Blue, yellow, dark grey, green

References: Schreiber 1703a, 1703b: Schizzerotto; tav. XXVI, XXVII; Bellini 32

Saint Tryphon was the patron, together with saints Jerome and George, of the Adriatic Slavs, and in particular, of the Dalmatian city of Kotor. Little is known about his life other than his birth at Campsada in Syria, and his martyrdom under Decius in Nicea around 251. The emperor Justinian dedicated a church to him in Constantinople. The image of the saint in these prints closely resembles the wooden sculpture from the altarpiece of the church of S. Giovanni del Tempio in Venice, now preserved at the school of Saint George of the Slavs.

These two examples were printed from the same block. The incongruous sword in the second example was added in ink by Jacopo Rubieri, the collector, in order to transform the saint into "s. vector" (Saint Victor), as he labelled the mounting sheet.

## *22 [32]*
### Saint Anthony of Padua

Padua, ca. 1470
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 13 from codex 485
Woodcut, 282 x 204 mm.
Pale brown, pale grey, opaque yellow

References: Schreiber 1233; Schizzerotto, tav. XXXVIII; Bellini 36

Schizzerotto has identified this print as the work of the marquetry artist Lorenzo Canozi (ca. 1420 - 1477). The design is obviously closely related to Canozi's portraits of Saint Anthony and Saint Francis on the reliquary of the Basilica del Santo in Padua. The figure and the background, interestingly, have more in common with the image of Saint Francis than that of Saint Anthony. Such images may have been distributed in hundreds, given the miracle-working reputation of the saint.

This woodcut is regarded by some scholars as the masterpiece of Italian 15th c. woodcuts for its elegance of form, for the quality of the design, and for the skill of execution of the block.

## *23 [34]*
### Saint Clare of Assisi

Venice, ca. 1480 (?)
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 17 from codex 485/IV (f. 85r)
Woodcut fragment, 230 x 95 mm.
Pale yellow, yellow, green, pale brown
Watermark: Star within a circle surmounted by a cross

References: Schreiber 1380; Schizzerotto, tav. XXXVII; Bellini 38

The gentle and harmonious lines of this woodcut have enchanted scholars from the 19th c. to the present day. The treatment of the robes and the large almond-shaped eyes are particularly noteworthy. The book and the lily are two of Clare's attributes. Hind sees an affinity with the Madonnas of Giovanni Bellini.

Clare (1194-1253) was born into a noble Italian family, but at the age of eighteen she ran away from home and took the veil from Saint Francis, who provided a refuge for her at San Paolo, and later at San Damiano, where the first convent of Poor Clares was established under her guidance. She is credited with miraculously protecting her convent and the city of Assisi from the Saracens in 1240 and 1241. She was canonized in 1255, only two years after her death.

## *24 [42]*
### Martyrdom of Simon of Trent

North-eastern Italy, 1475 - 1480
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 22 from codex 374 (f. 144r)
Woodcut fragments, 125 x 145 mm.
Red lead, grey-green, yellow, rose-brown, dark grey, applied with the aid of stencils

References: Schreiber 1970; Schizzerotto, tav. XXIII; Bellini 46

This is the only print among the Classense woodcuts based on a contemporary event, and records the only example of ritual child murder to be admitted into the martyrology.

The body of the alleged boy martyr was found near his home in Trent in March 1475. Several Jews were accused of the murder, tried and condemned, though their confessions, being obtained by torture, cannot be considered reliable. The local bishop and officials were virulently anti-Semitic, and used the murder as an excuse to mount a pogrom against the Jews of Trent, at least in part with the aim of destroying their monopoly of banking in favour of the newly-established Church savings institutions.

Numerous miracles were attributed to the boy, who was about two years old when he was killed. The cult of Simon was suspended by the Vatican in 1965, but the incident still awaits critical historical investigation.

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# Case 5: Golden Legend I

## *II*
### Jacobus de Voragine. *Legenda aurea sanctorum.* Strasbourg: G. Husner, about 1476.

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

The *Golden Legend* was possibly the most popular book of the Middle Ages. It consists of readings from the lives of the saints arranged for the festivals of the church year. It was probably written before 1260, and was quickly translated into French, German, English, Italian and Dutch. More than one hundred incunable editions of the *Golden Legend* are known.

Jacobus de Voragine (ca. 1228-1298?) was a Dominican, who ended his career as Archbishop of Genoa. In addition to the *Golden Legend* he wrote several series of sermons, and a history of Genoa.

## *25 [6]*
### Saint Josaphat

Venice, ca. 1440
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 30 from codex 485
Woodcut, 248 x 115 mm.
Yellow, red lead, orange, pale green, green
Watermark: (partial) Crown (?)

References: Schreiber 1575; Schizzerotto, tav. IV; Bellini 8

In the medieval story of Barlaam and Josaphat (or Joasaph) from the *Golden Legend*, the Indian prince Joasaph is converted to Christianity by the hermit Barlaam. The story appears to be the Christian adaptation of a Buddhist legend.

Josaphat was made the patron of the fruiterers' confraternity in Venice in 1423, and the image perhaps stems from this connection. Bellini finds the relative crudity of the design indicative of the decline in the quality of Venetian print-making which was noted in a document of 1441.

## *26 [8]*
### Saint Julian the Hospitaler

Veneto, 1440 - 1450
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 12 from codex 485
Woodcut, 273 x 180 mm.
Yellow, red-brown, green

References: Schreiber 1577; Schizzerotto, tav. XV; Bellini 10

The story of Saint Julian, from the *Golden Legend*, echoes the Oedipus story in medieval terms. One day, when the young Julian was out hunting, the stag he was about to bring down predicted that Julian would one day kill his own mother and father. To avoid this fate, Julian left his home, and eventually married the lady of a castle some distance away. His parents had meanwhile been searching for him, and by chance came to the castle. Julian was out hunting, and his wife Basilessa greeted her parents-in-law and invited them to rest in the matrimonial bed. When Julian returned that night, he discerned a man and woman in his bed. Imagining that he had been betrayed by his wife, he drew his sword and killed them both. To expiate his sin, Julian and his wife built a hospital and refuge for travellers on a river-bank. He thus became the patron saint of pilgrims, travellers and innkeepers.

The style of this print reflects late Gothic influence. Bellini considers it the work of a craftsman familiar with depictions of the courtly culture of the Lombardy-Veneto region.

26 *Saint Julian the Hospitaler* (Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense)

## *27 [13]*
### Saint Martin Sharing his Cloak with the Beggar

France, mid-15th c. (?)
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 45 from codex 485
Woodcut, 269 x 194 mm.
Yellow, grey-brown, rose-brown, black, opaque blue-green

References: Schreiber 1619; Schizzerotto, tav. XLVII; Bellini 15

Saint Martin (ca. 316 - 397) was born the son of a Roman officer in Hungary. He was educated at Pavia and enrolled in the imperial cavalry. The *Golden Legend* records the episode of his sharing his cloak with a beggar and the subsequent heavenly vision which led to his baptism. He left the army to become a monk-hermit, but in 371 he was elevated to the See of Tours. He was the greatest of the pioneers of Western monasticism before Saint Benedict.

This image is one of the most frequent and persistent in Western Christian iconography, one which caught the imagination of artists, clergy and laity alike. This print has been variously identified as an Italian product of around 1470 (Schreiber), as of German origin (Kristeller), or as the work of a German active in Northern Italy (Schizzerotto). Bellini, however, prefers to see stylistic similarities to a French block book of the period, *Les Neuf Preux* (Schreiber 1945).

## *28 [19]*
### Saint Nicholas of Myra

North Adriatic region, mid-15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 6 from codex 485/IV (f. 209r)
Woodcut, 275 x 120 mm.
Green, yellow, light brown, rose-brown, applied with the aid of stencils

References: Schreiber 1633; Schizzerotto, tav. XX; Bellini 21

Better known in Italy as S. Nicola di Bari (where his relics are preserved), Saint Nicholas is the prototype for our Santa Claus. The saint supports in his right hand the three golden balls which represent three purses full of gold which, in his legend, he threw at night into the house of three young girls, to provide for their marriage and prevent their being sold into prostitution.

The slight double image visible beside the saint's mitre and crozier are evidence of the movement of the paper during the hand-printing process. The Gothic structure framing the saint is very similar to that framing Filippo Benizzi in cat. 20.

## *29 [22]*
### Saint Marina

Marches, mid-15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 11 from codex 485
Woodcut fragment, 215 x 100 mm.
Light grey, dark grey, green, light brown, dull yellow

References: Schreiber 1621; Schizzerotto, tav. XXXIX; Bellini 26

The cult of Saint Marina was well established in the Adriatic region of Italy in the 13th and 14th c. A school dedicated to her was founded in Venice in 1325. Like many of the saints recorded in the *Golden Legend*, however, her historicity is doubtful. In the story, Marina enters a monastery as a man, so that she can continue to care for her widowed father, who had decided to end his days as a monk. She stayed on in the monastery after the death of her father, but was later expelled after being accused of impregnating the daughter of an innkeeper while travelling on a mission for her house. She lived and raised the child in a shack by the monastery wall, and was re-admitted after three years. It was only when she died, not long afterwards, that her true sex was discovered.

## *30 [31]*
### A Saint-Bishop with Saint Catherine of Alexandria

Veneto, 1460 - 1470
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 32 from codex 485
Woodcut, 268 x 163 mm.
Green, yellow, rose, brown, on an opaque ground

References: Schreiber 1344; Schizzerotto, tav. VIII; Bellini 35

The two saints hold the processional cross of the confraternity or guild under their protection. Their image is repeated on the banner hanging from the cross. Catherine is easily identified by the toothed wheel and the palm of martyrdom, but the saint-bishop has not been identified.

The print, from its relative crudity, is judged to be a provincial product. Bellini sees in the unusual staring eyes and the treatment of the hands a suggestion of the work of the itinerant painter Dario da Treviso, active in the Veneto after 1450.

# Case 6: Golden Legend II

## *31 [4]*
### Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian

Venice, ca. 1430
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 25 from codex 485/IV (f. 286r)
Woodcut, 272 x 200 mm.
Opaque yellow, pale yellow, green, grey-brown, red-brown

References: Schreiber 1676; Schizzerotto, tav. XXII; Bellini 5

The martyrdom of Saint Sebastian is one of the most common images of Renaissance Christian iconography. According to legend, Sebastian was an officer in the imperial army and a favourite of Diocletian. Nevertheless, when it was discovered that he was a Christian, he was tied to a tree and his body made a target for the Roman archers. He died around 290, although his cult dates from the 4th c. The Romans credited him with the cessation of the plague in 680. Thus he is often represented with Saint Roch in prophylactic images against the plague (e.g., cat. 37).

This design has been attributed to the Venetian miniaturist Cristoforo Cortese (active before 1445). Scholars have also seen resemblances between this Saint Sebastian and the woodcuts from the *Meditationes vitae Christi* printed in Venice in 1487 by Hieronymus de Sanctis et Cornelio.

The representation of Sebastian as a beautiful young man is a Renaissance development. Before this, he usually appears as a bearded veteran.

## *32 [23]*
### Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence

Marches, mid-15th c. (?)
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 39 from codex 485/IV (f. 1r)
Woodcut fragment, 97 x 145 mm.
Yellow, green, blue, rose-brown

References: Schreiber 1583; Schizzerotto, tav. XVI; Bellini 27

The surviving print is evidently part of a larger sheet, which perhaps showed other episodes from the life of the saint. Lawrence, an archdeacon of the Roman church, was condemned for breaking the emperor Valerian's pecuniary laws by distributing Church funds to the faithful. Our panel depicts

31 *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* (Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense)

the episode in which Saint Lawrence sarcastically asks his torturer to turn him over, because he is cooked on one side. The emperor and his minister Macriano look on, while God blesses the martyr from above.

Though unsophisticated in technique, the print shows formal resemblances to paintings and frescoes of the martyrdom, such as the painting by Jacobello del Fiore (d. 1439) preserved in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

## *33 [24]*
### Saint Stephen

North Adriatic region, ca. 1470
1) Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 20 from codex 485/V
Woodcut, 253 x 116 mm.
Yellow, opaque yellow, rose, green
Watermark: Scales within a circle surmounted by a trefoil
2) Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 21 from codex 485
Woodcut fragment, 243 x 91 mm.
Yellow, opaque yellow, rose, green, red lead
Watermark: Scales within a circle (partial)

References: Schreiber 1414; Schizzerotto, tav. XXIV, XXV; Bellini 28

These are two prints from the same block, and probably, from the evidence of the watermarks, from the same printing. The saint bears on his shoulders and head three stones symbolic of his martyrdom by stoning outside the walls of Jerusalem, the penalty prescribed for blasphemy under Mosaic Law. Stephen was the first Christian martyr. He was particularly venerated at Ancona, on the Adriatic coast, where a stone from his martyrdom was preserved. Therefore, Bellini proposes an Adriatic coastal origin for this image.

## *34 [27]*
### Saint Bartholomew

Venice, ca. 1450
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 3 from codex 485
Woodcut, 250 x 115 mm.
Yellow, brown, green, dark red
Watermark: Scales within a circle

References: Schreiber 1267; Schizzerotto, tav. VI; Bellini 31

According to Bede's martyrology, the apostle was flayed alive, and it is in this condition that he is pictured in the print, dripping with blood, holding the flaying knife in his hand, his skin complete with scalp draped over his left

shoulder like a mantle. This iconography is rare for Italy, where the saint is usually portrayed in classical robes, holding the knife and a book as attributes. The image of the flayed Bartholomew was more common in Germany, and the model for this Venetian image was probably of German origin.

## *35 [30]*
### Saint Roch

Veneto, 1460 - 1480
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 31bis from codex 485/IV (f. 73r)
Woodcut fragment, 173 x 70 mm.
Dark brown, yellow, opaque yellow, rose

References: Schizzerotto, tav. XXI; Bellini 34

This image was discovered underneath Jacopo Rubieri's body-colour rendering of Saint Roch and the Angel during the conservation work of 1938. It follows the normal iconography for Saint Roch, who is portrayed dressed as a pilgrim, with a staff, a broad-brimmed hat and a short cape, revealing the plague sore on his thigh.

Roch was born in Montpellier in France around 1350. Left an orphan, he decided, at the age of seventeen, to make a pilgrimage to Rome. He was discovered to have the power to heal the sick, which he did throughout Italy, and he was particularly venerated as a protector against the plague. It can well be imagined that any image of a saint thought to give protection against the plague would be valued in 15th c. Italy. Roch died in 1378 or 1379, after being imprisoned on suspicion of spying at Angera on Lake Maggiore. He is still the patron of many Italian towns.

## *III*
### Jacobus de Voragine. *The Golden legend*. London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1527.

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

This edition of the *Golden Legend* is thought to be the last book published by Wynkyn de Worde, Caxton's apprentice and successor. It is based on Caxton's English edition of 1483. Caxton's edition was based on existing English and French versions, and therefore the text differs substantially from the Latin versions (cat. II).

Henry VIII broke with Rome in 1534, and this book has been annotated by a Protestant hand, most obviously for the later saints who had also been popes, and who have uniformly been reduced to bishops.

# Case 7: Dominican Prints

## *36 [26]*
### Saint Vincent Ferrer

Venice, ca. 1470
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 24 from codex 485/V
Woodcut, 246 x 116 mm.
Green, yellow, red-brown, light brown, light grey
Watermark: Quadruped (?)

References: Schreiber 1751; Schizzerotto, tav. XXXI; Bellini 30

The subject of this print is, by his robes, a Dominican, and has variously been identified as Dominic himself, Saint Peter Martyr or Saint Thomas Aquinas. Bellini inclines towards the identification as Saint Vincent Ferrer, because the words (visible on the book he holds), which read "veritate vicit ixpo iesu et in eclesia", are sung in the masses celebrated in his honour.

A powerful preacher who earned the sobriquet "Angel of the Judgement", Vincent played an important part in the movement towards the healing of the Western Schism, though he was not present at the Council of Constance (see cat. VI) of 1414 - 1418 which brought an end to the schism. The iconography concerning Vincent is extensive. Portraits of him were painted by, among others, Fra Angelico, Bartolomeo della Porta and Ghirlandaio.

## *37 [35]*
### Saint Sebastian and Saint Vincent Ferrer (?)
### Saint Peter Martyr and Saint Roch

Venice, ca. 1480
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 19 from codex 485
Woodcut fragments, 230 x 85 mm., 220 x 105 mm.
Blue, crimson, green, rose, dark grey, brown
Watermark: Anchor within a circle

References: Schreiber 1770; Schizzerotto, tav. XXXII; Bellini 39

Saint Roch is accompanied by Saint Peter Martyr, identifiable by the billhook embedded in his skull. Peter (ca. 1205-1252) was the first Dominican martyr. As papal inquisitor he aroused the hatred of the Cathars, and was murdered on the road between Como and Milan. He was canonized the following year,

and became the patron of inquisitors. The identification of Saint Vincent Ferrer is less secure, but certainly corresponds to the same grouping of saints in a polyptych by Andrea da Murano (active 1462 - 1507) preserved in the Accademia in Venice, but originally in the Dominican church in Murano. The occasion for this Dominican-sponsored print was possibly the outbreak of the plague in the Venice region in 1478, the last outbreak of the century. Both Saint Sebastian and Saint Roch were traditionally invoked against the Black Death. The Dominicans took the opportunity to associate with them two of their own saints, also commemorated as healers.

## *38 [37]*

### Saint Augustine Blessing Saint Monica and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino

Venice, ca. 1470
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 21bis from codex 485
Woodcut, 279 x 197 mm.
Vermilion, dark red, yellow, pale rose, black-brown, blue, black, applied with the aid of stencils

References: Schizzerotto, tav. XLIV; Bellini 41

This print is an Augustinian devotional image from the same workshop that produced the Dominican prints, cat. 39 - 41. This identification is supported by similarities in style, in the blocks used for the frames, in colouring and , in particular, the angels with their unusual triangular diadems.

Saint Monica was the mother of Saint Augustine, who paints an unforgettable picture of her in his *Confessions.* She followed him to Rome and Milan, and died and was buried at Ostia in 387, on the eve of a return journey to Africa.

Saint Nicholas of Tolentino (1245 - 1305) was revered as a preacher and confessor, and was also known for his work among the poor. He is frequently depicted with a star on his chest.

## *39 [38]*

### Saint Dominic with Saint Peter Martyr and Saint Catherine of Siena

Venice, 1470 - 1480
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 23 from codex 485
Woodcut, 265 x 186 mm.
Vermilion, dark red, yellow, blue, black, applied with the aid of stencils
Watermark: Quadruped (?)

References: Schreiber 1385; Schizzerotto, tav. XLI; Bellini 42

This piece of Dominican propaganda is crowded with saintly attributes (Bellini counts at least eighteen) and is obviously intended as an instrument of devotional instruction. In addition to the Dominican saints, we see the Virgin Mary holding the black cape and white scapular of the order, and Saints Peter and Paul holding their own attributes, the keys and the sword, and offering Saint Dominic the staff and book of the preacher (a reminder of the legend that Dominic received authorization to found his order from the two saints in a vision). Bellini derides the aesthetic poverty of this composition, but its practical purpose as an instrument of instruction would override such considerations for the order which commissioned it.

## *40 [39]*
### Saint Peter Martyr

Venice, 1470 - 1480
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 18 from codex 485/V (loose leaf)
Woodcut, 187 x 175 mm.
Red, blue, yellow, black, applied with the aid of stencils
Watermark: Cross

References: Schreiber 1664; Schizzerotto, tav. XLII; Bellini 43

This image, like cat. 39, is crowded with attributes. The saint himself displays seven, while the Virgin Mary and the angels hold the three crowns (of virginity, martyrdom, and evangelical doctrine) already associated with Catherine of Siena, which play a part in the service for the feast of the saint.

The decorative pieces which make up the border, also present in cat. 38-9 and 41, resemble those used in Venetian book production around 1460 - 1470, and thus provide some confirmation for the proposed date and provenance of the prints.

## *41 [40]*
### Crucifix of Saint Peter Martyr

Venice, 1470 - 1480
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 34ter from codex 485
Woodcut, 273 x 177 mm.
Red, dark grey, blue, yellow, rose, applied with the aid of stencils

References: Schizzerotto, tav. XLIII; Bellini 44

The source for this scene is a 14th c. legend of Saint Peter Martyr (d. 1252) according to which a speaking crucifix appeared to comfort the stricken inquisitor and his companion Brother Dominic, attacked by heretics in the woods of Barlassima between Como and Milan. The arms of the cross serve to separate the earthly scene from the celestial reception of the martyred

Dominican by angels, Dominican saints and Christ. Note again the motif of the three crowns, as in cat. 40.

Though apparently from the same workshop as that which produced cat. 38-40, the main scene of this print demonstrates stronger design values and a more accomplished hand on the gouge than those others.

## Case 8: Engravings

### *42 [36]*
**Saint Augustine (?)**

Florence, 1460 - 1470
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 42 from codex 374
Fragment of an engraving, 200 x 84 mm.
Blue, green, yellow, brown, rose, gold
Watermark: Ladder

References: Schizzerotto, tav. XLIX; Bellini 40

According to Hind, this fragment is an example of Florentine fine-manner engraving—a technique derived from the work of the niellists, engravers who worked in silver and filled their graved lines with a black compound to render their designs visible. Some niellists printed on paper from their work, thus producing a rough equivalent of engraved prints. Supported by three cherubim, the seated saint, one hand raised in blessing, the other holding his crozier, hovers over the terrestrial globe. Schizzerotto and Bellini identify the saint-bishop as Augustine on the basis of the books which appear behind the globe, and which are also present in the painting of Augustine by Bartolomeo Vivarini (fl. 1450 - 1499) in the Basilica of Saint John and Saint Paul, Venice.

### *43 [43]*
**Image of the "Holy Countenance"**

Florence, ca. 1480
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 41 from codex 485/IV
Fragment of an engraving, 189 x 160 mm.
Blue, green, gold, yellow-brown
Watermark: Scales within a circle

References: Schizzerotto, tav. XLVIII; Bellini 48

45 *Saint Roch* (Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense)

This fragment combines the fine manner engraving of the niellist (seen in the modelling of the features) with the broad manner engraving of the pen draughtsman (as in the beard and the hair), and perhaps the cruder work of a helper (in the hatching of the robe). Scholarly opinion considers it Florentine work, perhaps from the studio of Francesco Rosselli (1445 - ca. 1508), a painter, miniaturist, engraver and cartographer, who worked in both styles.

The image itself is of the reliquary-statue preserved in the Duomo of Lucca, representing the living Christ on the cross. From the 14th c. on this statue was an object of great veneration, and images of it were spread wherever citizens of Lucca settled. Bellini suggests that the three crosses of the Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem, seen on the stole, indicate that the print may have been used as an instrument of propaganda in the Venetian territories under the protection of the Hospitalers.

## *44 [44]*
### Madonna and Child in a Glory

Low Countries, second half of the 15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 43 from codex 485/V
Fragments of an engraving, 264 x 193 mm.
Watermark: Crossed swords

References: Schizzerotto, tav. LI; Bellini 49

Identified by Lehrs as long ago as 1888 as the work of the Westphalian or Lower Rhenish "Master of the Banderoles" (active 1461 - 1467), best known as a copyist of the work of the Master E.S., this is probably the most studied impression of the Classense collection.

The description of "a woman clothed with the sun" (*Revelation* 12.1) gave rise to the traditional image of the Virgin in Heaven as a personification of the Church.

This impression was collected in Italy by Rubieri, and, from the evidence of the watermark, was printed on Italian paper. The plate, however, is assumed to have been engraved in or close to the Rhineland.

## *45 [45]*
### Saint Roch

Cologne, 1460 - 1470
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 40 from codex 374
Metalcut, 182 x 125 mm. (image); 234 x 180 mm. (border)
Rose-brown, green, yellow, rose
Watermark: Unicorn

References: Schreiber 2722; Schizzerotto, tav. LII; Bellini 50

The saint is represented, as always, as a pilgrim, revealing the bubonic ulcer on his thigh. The print is considered to be from the workshop of the Master of the Cologne Arms, active in the 1460s and 1470s, though the frame is of a type associated with the Master of the Mountain-like Clouds (Field 346).

Field writes: "The metalcut was a phenomenon virtually restricted to the second half of the fifteenth century, and for the most part to the Rhine regions, from the Netherlands upstream through Cologne to Basel and the Bodensee. It was a peculiar medium in that it partook of some of the qualities of both the woodcut and the engraving. But since prints are classified by their method of inking and printing, the metalcut is basically regarded as a relief print; a copper or lead plate has simply been substituted for the plank of wood. Like the woodcut, the printing surface is what remains of the original surface after it has been worked by the knife (and occasionally the burin) and often by a variety of punches. Because the round punch or dot was extensively employed, the term "dotted print" has also been applied to these works."

This impression is the only example of this technique in the Classense corpus.

## *46 [46]*
### Carrack

Venice, second half of the 15th c.
Biblioteca Classense inv. no. 44 from codex 485/IV
Fragment of an engraving, 124 x 145 mm.
Yellow-brown
Watermark: Scales within a circle

References: Schizzerotto, tav. L; Bellini 51

This sort of sailing vessel, common in the Mediterranean in the 15th c., was often used to carry pilgrims to the Holy Land, and Venice was the traditional port of embarkation. The lines of shields marked with crosses lining the quarterdeck and forecastle show that this print is a representation of a pilgrim ship, or a military transport for an expedition against the Ottoman Turks.

Ships empty of crew are frequently found in the works of Flemish or Florentine engravers of 1460 to 1480, and such works were often models for goldsmiths, miniaturists, and other artists, though this example may simply have served a votive function.

# East Reading Room

## *IV*

### Cichorium Domesticum *Cichorium intybus* Chicory

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
Woodblock for page 502 of: P.A. Mattioli. *Commentarii in sex Pedacii Dioscoridis Anazarbei De medica materia...* Venice: Valgrisi, 1565.
Pear wood, 222 x 159 mm.

References: *The Mattioli woodblocks.* London: Quaritch, 1989.

This is one of almost six hundred large woodblocks designed by Giorgio Liberale and Wolfgang Meyerpeck for editions of Mattioli's herbal in 1562 and 1565, which represent the apogee of the art of botanical woodcut illustration in the sixteenth century. The blocks were used for successive editions until 1604. They were later bought by the French botanist Henri Duhamel de Monceau (1700 - 1782), who used 154 of them to illustrate his *Traité des arbres et arbustes* (1755). Those blocks were then lost, but the remainder stayed in the possession of his family until the mid-1950s, when some were dispersed. The Thomas Fisher Library was fortunate to be able to purchase this rare and important woodblock in 1989.

## *V*

### *Speculum humanae salvationis*. Augsburg: G. Zainer at the monastery of SS. Ulrich & Afra, not after 1473.

Royal Ontario Museum, on deposit

This is the first typographical edition of the *Speculum*, the first edition of the German text, and the first to contain Latin and German together. It includes 194 woodcuts, each about 74 x 119 mm. with a double border line. In some copies of this edition the woodcuts are hand-coloured.

This book is intended as a manual for poor preachers, and thus it resembles a *Biblia Pauperum.*

## *VI*

**Ulrich von Richental. *Das Conciliumbuch geschehen zu Konstanz*. Augsburg: A. Sorg, 1483.**

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, gift of the Morawetz family

This account of the Council of Constance (1414-1418) contains thirty-nine full-page woodcuts, each approximately 200 x 135 mm., together with three smaller cuts and 1159 coats of arms. The book is open at the woodcuts showing the martyrdom of John Hus, who attended the Council under a safe-conduct, but was nevertheless tried, condemned and executed in 1415. Pope John XXIII, one of the three competing popes of the Great Schism, had induced the emperor Sigismund to withdraw his safe-conduct on the ground that the Church is not obligated to keep faith with the faithless.

## *VII*

**Dante Alighieri. *La commedia*. Venice: Petrus de Plasiis, 1491.**

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

The printer was active in Venice from 1478 to 1494, during which time he printed editions of Petrarch, Virgil, the Breviary and the Missal, in addition to his illustrated *Divine comedy.*

## *VIII*

**Hartmann Schedel. *Liber chronicarum*. Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1493.**

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

The 645 wood blocks for the 1809 illustrations in this history of the world and description of its main cities are by Michael Wolgemut and his stepson Wilhelm Pleydenwurff.

This remarkable book, sponsored, created and printed in the city of Nuremberg, was issued in an edition of at least fifteen hundred copies, and was distributed throughout Europe.

## *IX*

## Terence. *Comoediae*. Lyon: Johann Trechsel, 1493.

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

This first illustrated edition of Terence contains one hundred and sixty woodcuts, a few of which are repeats. They are all in the same style, though perhaps by more than one hand, and measure 102 x 121 mm. Hugh W. Davies states that the costume of the characters and general arrangement of the stage as shown in these pictures are probably quite characteristic of dramatic representations in the Middle Ages.

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